Sherry Gorelick. *City College and the Jewish Poor: Education in New York, 1880-1924.* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1981) x, 269 pp., $14.95.

Hidden in these quiet pages is a probing analysis of what has happened to *all* Americans, not just the Jewish poor who went to City College. Gorelick begins by reexamining the myth, now used against other ethnic groups, that "docile Jews, living in safe slums, gratefully, respectfully, obediently lap up the gifts of Anglo-Saxon culture to the admiration and love of their teachers."

She tells much more than this; she tells about deeds which humans are somehow reluctant to face, e.g., that it is possible for people to participate in their own final solution, believing that they are entering Eden; that calling trends "modern" or "progressive" does not make them so; that well-intentioned people can become Capos who manipulate their less fortunate fellow creatures; how our most respected citizens, looking out for the main chance, become spokespersons for the rest of us.

The first significant migration of Jews had come from Germany in the late 1830s and 1840s and were not part of the "tired, poor, hungry masses." As prosperous and successful merchants, bankers, and traders, they rose rapidly in the new social and economic hierarchy becoming a threat to the unchallenged dominance of WASP industrial tycoons. However, Jews did not come to America in great numbers until 1881 when the first major Russian Pogoms occurred in the wake of the Assassination of Alexander II. German Jews were a little nervous about the arrival of these East European refugees and tried to discourage the paupers among them from coming. The German Jewish leadership was hostile not only to the poor but also to Orthodox Jews and socialists and it was among the East European Jews, dissillusioned by denial of opporrunity to escape their poverty, that socialism, populism, and labor militancy became viable ideological allegiances.

Prominent academics, Samuel Gompers and other "respectable" (i.e., non-radical) labor leaders, Jacob Schiff, Isaac Seligman, Oscar Straus, Louis Marshall, and Louis Brandeis together with Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan's partners, and the heads of the country's largest corporations devised a system of political co-optation. Labelled Progressivism, it tried to take the sting out of worker unrest, populism, and socialism by promoting social reform that did not disturb special privilege.

Education was a choice means for Progressives to take into their custody the dissatisfied immigrants. To educate the *shtetl* out of the poor Jews was impossible but one could work with their children. Americanization could render harmless the most radical ideas and promote social harmony. "Educate," said Henry Lee Higgenson, Harvard's benefactor, "and save ourselves and our families and our money from mobs."

City College, then known as the Free Academy, was started in the mid-nineteenth century in response to the insistence of the Working Men's Party of New York on a ten-hour day, a periodic redistribution of property, and the education of youth until age eighteen. By the turn of the century, seventy-six percent of New York City's population was either foreign-born or the offspring of the foreign-born. It was also home to most of the Jews who came to America. Many of the most important Progressive leaders were either born or lived in New York. When the new century gave rise to Progressive reform of higher education, City College played an important role in experimentation. Because it was publicly supported, demonstration projects could be funded with tax money instead of private philanthropy. But in order for the Progressives to introduce changes implementing reforms with which they sympathized, they had to secure political control. After an intense battle, they managed to remove educational decision-making from public election and vest it in appointed and virtually self-perpetuating boards.

The main protagonist in the struggle to remold public education in the interest of business was Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler. With a Committee of almost the whole *Social Register*, except for Jacob Schiff and Isaac Seligman, he was determined to support the kind of education "which would inculcate respect for private property and individual liberty."

By the end of the nineteenth century when the Jewish poor had poured into New York, CCNY had a large Jewish student body. Unfortunately, Progressive reform of the college ignored a statement laid down by the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge among the Working Classes in 1835: that education exists "not only to enlighten the mind upon general subjects but to teach that class, who supply the fountain of existence, whence their evils spring and how to remedy them."

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